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ABSTRACT

A continuing and increasing demand for collegiate business education programs seems to be indicated by employment needs of the business sector. During a time of obvious increased need, enrollments in teacher education are suffering one of their sharpest declines in history. A National Association for Business Teacher Education (NABTE) survey on the "Image/Status of Business Education" reveals that 52.9 percent of the responding institutions are experiencing declining enrollments in business teacher education programs. Over 54 percent of respondents indicate their administrative office management programs do not appear to have had an adverse effect on teacher education enrollments. In fact, business teacher education programs located in the same cities as technical/community colleges have maintained better enrollments. Business education, however, does not appear to be experiencing inequitable staff reductions. NABTE respondents feel that the ingredients necessary for quality business education programs include funding, a competent staff, administrative support, an up-to-date curriculum, a strong recruitment program, improved teaching conditions, and innovative programs. Suggestions to encourage maximum departmental growth are recruitment, improved funding, a curriculum changed to meet needs of a changing society, and improved teaching conditions. (YLB)

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HOW TO INFLUENCE POLICY FOR MAXIMUM DEPARTMENTAL GROWTH

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In February, 1982, a conference of interested business educators, equipment manufacturers, and publishers met in Tempe, Arizona, at a conference titled "New Concept of Business Education." A segment of the approved statement emanating from that conference suggested that "The number of information workers has been increasing at a rapid rate. Predictions are that by 1990 about 76 percent of the labor force will be engaged in information occupations."¹ In a similar conference titled "A Symposium: Business Teacher Education" held at Rider College in November, 1980, Dean Clayton, of the University of Arkansas, addressed a group of business education leaders. He indicated that "The increased demands for students in the world of business and related areas are probably without precedent. It is, therefore, a basic assumption and/or principle that with these demands, there should be a co-existing demand for preservice and in-service programs to supply students (prospective and experienced teachers) to assist in fulfilling these demands of society."² Both of these statements would indicate a continuing and increasing demand for collegiate business education programs.

During a time of obvious increased need, it is also apparent that enrollments in teacher education are suffering one of their sharpest declines in history. Dean C. Corrigan, Dean of Texas A & M University College of Education, made several observations relative to an impending teacher shortage. They included:

1. Almost half of the teachers with 12 or more years of teaching experience are considering leaving the profession.
2. The number of new students entering teacher education programs at the college and university level is declining so rapidly that a severe teacher shortage is imminent. Less than five percent of entering college freshmen last fall indicated a preference for teaching, which is down 30 percent from a decade earlier. This decline comes at a time when school enrollments are increasing at the elementary levels.
3. Test scores of high school graduates selecting teaching as a career are significantly lower than in the past.³

Although Corrigan was referring primarily to the situation in Texas, his comments seem relevant to much of the remainder of the United States.

In light of the statements by Clayton and Corrigan above, it would follow that business education programs should be growing to meet existing and projected needs. However, research indicates a different picture of business education at the collegiate level. A survey of NABTE representatives on the "Image/Status of Business Education"⁴ provided data which revealed several interesting trends. First, these data revealed that 57 percent of the 155 who responded represent programs in Colleges of Business. Twenty-three percent are housed in Colleges of Education, and the others are in divisions, centers, and schools.

Instead of enrollments increasing in business teacher education, as the needs would indicate, they are declining rather substantially. The data in Table I indicate that 52.9 percent of the responding institutions are experiencing declining enrollments in BTE programs. Only 11.6 percent indicate their BTE enrollments are increasing; while 35.5 percent report no change in their enrollments.

TABLE I
BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT TRENDS
IN RESPONDING NABTE INSTITUTIONS

<u>Location of Program</u>	<u>Increasing</u>	<u>Decreasing</u>	<u>Remaining The Same</u>	<u>Totals</u>
College of Business	9 (10.1%)	43 (54.0%)	32 (36.0%)	89
College of Education	4 (11.4%)	17 (48.6%)	14 (40.0%)	35
Both CBA and COE	--	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	4
Other (Divisions, Voc. Centers, Etc.)	5 (18.5%)	15 (55.5%)	7 (26.0%)	27
	18 (11.6%)	82 (52.9%)	55 (35.5%)	155

However, when we look at the enrollment patterns of Administrative Office Management programs, a different picture can be seen. Table II reveals a different pattern, however, for AOM programs. Over 54 percent of the respondents indicate their AOM programs have increasing enrollments, while only 13.8 percent have decreasing enrollments. Over 30 percent indicated no change in their AOM enrollments. Approximately 79 percent of the respondents indicated that they had some kind of AOM program.

TABLE II
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE MANAGEMENT ENROLLMENT TRENDS
IN RESPONDING NABTE INSTITUTIONS

<u>Location of Program</u>	<u>Increasing</u>	<u>Decreasing</u>	<u>Remaining The Same</u>	<u>Totals</u>
College of Business	48 (60.0%)	10 (12.5%)	22 (27.5%)	80
College of Education	9 (42.9%)	2 (9.5%)	10 (47.6%)	21
Other	10 (45.5%)	5 (22.7%)	7 (31.8%)	22
	67 (54.5%)	17 (13.8%)	39 (31.7%)	123

Although the number of institutions with two-year programs has been declining in recent years (only 47 percent of the respondents), those with such programs did not show as clear cut enrollment trends as did the AOM and BTE programs. Approximately 30 percent of those who have two-year programs indicate increasing enrollments, but over 53 percent said their programs were not changing. The decline in number of two-year programs in colleges and universities is probably due to the increase in the number of technical/community college programs.

TABLE III

TWO-YEAR SECRETARIAL PROGRAM ENROLLMENT TRENDS
IN RESPONDING NABTE INSTITUTIONS

<u>Location of Program</u>	<u>Increasing</u>	<u>Decreasing</u>	<u>Remaining The Same</u>	<u>Totals</u>
College of Business	16 (38.1%)	6 (14.3%)	20 (47.6%)	42
College of Education	2 (15.4%)	3 (23.1%)	8 (61.5%)	13
Other	<u>3 (18.75%)</u>	<u>3 (18.75%)</u>	<u>10 (62.5%)</u>	<u>16</u>
	21 (29.6%)	12 (16.9%)	38 (53.5%)	71

Many vocational educators contend that technical/community colleges have had a significant impact on enrollments in vocational programs in colleges and universities. Technical/community colleges may have impacted on the number of two-year business programs; however, they don't appear to have had an adverse affect on teacher education enrollments. In fact, the data in Table IV seem to indicate that business teacher education programs located in the same cities as technical/community colleges have maintained enrollments better than others. Perhaps this is caused by transfers into four-year programs from the two-year institutions.

TABLE IV

PROXIMITY OF TECHNICAL/COMMUNITY COLLEGES
TO RESPONDING NABTE INSTITUTIONS, AND THE
STATUS OF THESE INSTITUTIONS'S BTE PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS

<u>Location of Nearest Technical/Community College</u>	<u>Status of BTE Programs</u>			<u>Totals</u>
	<u>Increasing</u>	<u>Decreasing</u>	<u>Remaining The Same</u>	
In the Same City	10 (15.9%)	31 (49.2%)	22 (34.9%)	63
Within 20 Miles	2 (6.9%)	17 (58.6%)	10 (34.5%)	29
Between 21 and 50 Miles	1 (2.7%)	20 (54.0%)	16 (43.3%)	37
Over 50 Miles	<u>3 (15.8%)</u>	<u>11 (57.9%)</u>	<u>5 (26.3%)</u>	<u>19</u>
	16 (10.8%)	79 (53.4%)	53 (35.8%)	148

Even though enrollments are shifting in business education, and colleges and universities are almost universally experiencing staff reductions, business education staffs are not being reduced as much as might be expected. The data in Table V show that 35 institutions plan reductions in their business education staffs, and 20 expect additions to their staffs. The greatest number, however, do not anticipate any changes. In light of reductions across almost all staff lines in colleges and universities, business education does not appear to be experiencing inequitable staff reductions.

TABLE V
TYPES OF CHANGES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION STAFFS
OF REPORTING NABTE INSTITUTIONS

<u>Types of Changes</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>
Additions	20
Reductions	35
Changes in Assignment	24
No Changes Anticipated	67

When considering the earlier statements by Clayton and Corrigan, what is happening in business education is frightening. Instead of staff reductions, there should be substantial gains in faculty. It is encouraging to observe increases in enrollments in Administrative Office Management programs; however, the same should be true of business teacher education enrollments. So, how can the situation be turned around? What are the ingredients necessary for quality business education programs? This question was asked of the NABTE representatives, and their responses are shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI
THE KEY INGREDIENTS NECESSARY FOR MAINTENANCE AND/OR GROWTH OF
QUALITY BUSINESS PROGRAMS ACCORDING TO RESPONDENTS FROM NABTE INSTITUTIONS

<u>Key Ingredients</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. Funding for updating equipment, etc.	48
2. A Competent Staff (productive, energetic, etc.)	30
3. Administrative Support	24
4. A Complete, Up-To-Date, Curriculum	22
5. A Strong Recruitment Program	21
6. A Means to Attract <u>Quality</u> Students	12
7. Improved Teaching Conditions	11
8. Innovative Programs	9
9. State Department Cooperation, Support, etc.	8
10. Availability of More Teaching Positions in Secondary Education	8
11. Professionalism of Staff	7
12. Staff Research and Publication	5
13. Emphasis on Business, Not Education	3
14. Public Relations Programs	2

When studying the responses to this question, it appeared that respondents listed ingredients which they needed in their programs. Therefore, as might be expected, funding was listed most often as a key ingredient for quality business programs. When funding was mentioned, the words equipment and technology usually followed.

Several ingredients are rather closely related, even after combining a number of responses. Ingredients such as "A Competent Staff," "Professionalism of Staff," and "Staff Research and Publication" are all rather closely related. So are items 4 and 8; as well as 5, 6, and 13. An interesting observation was that 22 respondents from Colleges of Business and 2 from Divisions of Business were the only ones who listed "Administrative Support" as a key ingredient.

Knowing what the ingredients should be, and securing those ingredients are two completely different things. Strong leadership is an absolute necessity to provide some of these missing ingredients. But, before one can influence policy, one must first determine who exerts leadership in each state. This identification is essential if one wishes to have an influence on that leadership. One of the questions in the NABTE questionnaire asked where leadership in business education comes from in the various states. The data in Table VII provide a look at their responses. As might be expected, much of the leadership emanates from State Departments and colleges and universities. An interesting finding is that professional business education organizations also provide leadership in many states. A sad statistic is that 13 respondents indicated they have no state leadership in business education.

TABLE VII

WHERE STATE LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS EDUCATION COMES FROM
ACCORDING TO RESPONDENTS FROM NABTE INSTITUTIONS

<u>Source of Leadership</u>	<u>Responses*</u>
State Department of Education	64
Colleges and Universities	60
State Business Education Associations and other Professional Organizations	47
Local Sources such as school Districts and so forth	8
Have no state leadership	13

*Some respondents indicated more than one source

It is good to know what should be, and what is, and who the leaders are; but now what can be done to cause maximum departmental growth? Below are a number of suggestions which might prove helpful.

Recruit. Keep in close contact with alumni--this might be done through a departmental newsletter. If you have an undergraduate professional fraternity, have them

visit local FBLA and/or OFA meetings to tell about your programs. Communicate with business educators in technical/community colleges about your program. Be an active participant in local, state and national professional organizations. Develop a recruiting brochure for your college or university professional recruiters to take with them. Participate in career days at area high schools. Invite secondary teachers to bring classes to visit your department.

Funding. Develop a state legislative network through your alumni, state professional organization, or perhaps even through your DPE chapter, if you have one. Communicate your needs to your state legislators through this network. Communicate your needs to the local business community. Let them know that one scholarship for a business teacher candidate will eventually prepare thousands for the business community while a scholarship for an accounting or marketing student will only prepare one for the same business community. Check with local and state charitable foundations which may have funds for local projects. Communicate with State Departments of Education to determine whether funds are available for state projects. If permissible, establish an alumni scholarship fund.

Curriculum. Change curriculum to meet the needs of a changing society. We must recognize that computers are affecting business education at all levels and the curriculum must change as a result. We must also recognize that technical/community colleges are a vital part of business education, and their role should be reflected in the curriculum. The basic business elements in our curriculum must be strengthened to reflect the "back to the basics" movement across the country.

Staff. When possible, give release time for research. Assign senior staff members to serve as mentors to help less experienced staff members with research and writing. When staff members are deserving, nominate them for the various awards in business education. Help junior staff members become involved in professional organizations as officers, speakers, authors, and active participants. Equal recognition should be given for service and research as for teaching when considering merit pay increases and promotions.

When looking at headlines such as "Faculty Layoffs," "Budget Cuts, and "Calls for Abolition of Programs," things look grim, and many business educators have felt the sting of these actions. But business education will survive and grow. Secondary business education will remain strong as long as it continues to meet the ever changing needs of business and society. Office education programs must, and are, growing to meet increasing demands for office workers. Leaders in business education must also become leaders of business education to provide the ingredients which will make business education become what it should be--a vital force shaping business for the future.

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